



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Socorro Volunteers “Make a Difference”**

Socorro, New Mexico – We’ve all heard that one person can make a difference. Well, what happens when there are 72? It’s pure magic. Because of that “magic,” the national “Making a Difference” volunteer award will be presented to the BLM Socorro Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) program in a Washington DC ceremony on May 11, 2005. The award-winning program is made up of several OHV groups that created the magic for the BLM office in Socorro.

The group consists of 72 volunteers from the New Mexico OHV Alliance; National Vending Racing, Socorro; Team R & S, Albuquerque; Hick’s Body Shop, Socorro; New Mexico 4-Wheelers, Albuquerque; New Mexico Tech University Off-Road Club, Socorro; Spoke-N-Word, Socorro; and Wes Willis Financial, San Acacia.

It all began with a need. The BLM needed an inventory and map for all roads and trails in Gordy’s Hill Off-Highway Vehicle Area, overlooking the Rio Grande Valley and Bosque. The OHV volunteers commenced an exhaustive road inventory, resulting in identification of at least 120 existing and potential routes, numerous public visitor use contacts, and discovery of unauthorized OHV intrusions by unknown persons into two wilderness study areas.

Since beginning the project, volunteers have ridden or walked over 300 miles reconnoitering, flagging, using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to accomplish the task. In addition to inventory, some individuals have made additional contributions. Jeff Porter (Team R&S) built and installed a prototype ATV/dirt bike cattle guard, with more planned throughout the area. Gordy Hicks (Hick’s Body Shop) fabricated special brackets for holding GPS units onto dirt bike and ATV handlebars and donated them to the BLM.

OHV Program volunteers have helped educate visitors on the unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources of this highly scenic locale. The group has also contributed many hours to site design, visitor-use data collection, photo monitoring, boundary marking, and assessment of OHV impacts at sensitive sites such as springs and cultural sites. Group members have served as instructors at annual volunteer training sessions and are skilled in the principles of both the *Leave No Trace* and *Tread Lightly!* ethics programs.

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The BLM estimates that in 2004 more than 7,000 people visited Gordy's Hill. Thanks to the efforts of this OHV volunteer group, the BLM is seeing vast improvements in recreationists' awareness of the public lands as well as visitor understanding of ethical outdoor behavior.

Gordy Hicks will represent the Socorro Field Office OHV Program at the award ceremony in May. Also planning to attend is Joanne Spivack, president of the New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance, a BLM partner.

For more information about volunteering, go to your nearest BLM office or go online to [www.blm.gov/volunteer/](http://www.blm.gov/volunteer/) and help create some magic.